

"mirror eye" is hereditary. His mother says that she has a brother living in South Carolina, well versed in Hebrew, who writes all his Hebrew characters backward. She says there was a similar case in her family several years ago.

ARMY OF DESPAIR

By Fred Isler, Sec'y Hoboes' Union.

MIDNIGHT MISSION.—It is midnight. The weather is cold and raw. The lights on State street are shining brightly. From the saloons come loud and boisterous conversation. Crowds are coming out of the movies and cheap vaudeville shows which are a feature on the street. This marks the midnight hour in the neighborhood and is part of its daily routine.

At the same hour something else is taking place and few pay any attention to it. It is hardly noticeable. Yet it is more than an incident in the great tragedy of life.

What is it? Part of the Army of Despair. Without advance notice or advertising bills they have learned that a new haven of refuge, a place to sleep, is open; and like bees around the comb they crowd a small hall, known as the Midnight Mission. And they crowd it well, not a seat is left vacant, not an inch of space that is not taken. One hundred strong they are and 42 seats to accommodate them, and more are coming, but the doortender has had to close the glass door. They try the door, look at the head of the stairs, and then a deeper note of despair can be seen on their faces. Their last chance to sleep in a warm place is gone. For the balance of the night it will be the cold street and they will have to walk and walk till the friendly doors of a saloon will be opened in the morning. In the expressive language of the unemployed, "they will carry the banner."

Inside the service has been on for over one hour, evangelist after evangelist has spoken and stinging remarks against sin and temptation are

made by the speakers. Then comes the turn of the Rev. Bell, well known in connection with his activities against the old restricted district. First, he requests those who are seated to get up and give a chance to those who have had to stand. Then, looking sadly over the assembly and probably moved by the spectacle of so many unfortunates, in a voice shaking with emotion, he says: "We realize that times are hard and we don't want to scold you, only a little for what's good for you."

Striking is the appearance of the crowd, mostly composed of young men, not a bad-looking lot. Truly, quite a few are in tatters, others have the marks of dissipation written on their faces. However, with the majority the mark of misery and pinching poverty is more in evidence. Several, fairly well-dressed and wearing white collars, are noticeable. These evidently were in the past working in stores and offices, and since discharged from their employment have made a heroic effort to keep up appearance, for they know only too well that unless they do so their chances for a position in the future are gone. They, too, show plainly that pitiful look of despair which marks the countenance of the majority of the unemployed. They try to hide it, but try as they will it is nevertheless there and will probably be there fore some time to come. They can't get away from it.

After the service newspapers are spread on the floor and more than 90 men will turn in for the night and make an attempt to snatch a few moments of repose. How they will manage to sleep under such conditions is a mystery. Impossible to stretch at full length, no accommodations, they will spend the night as best they can. Besides, the Rev. Bell will give every one a few cents, sufficient to buy a little food and a cup of coffee in the morning, which means much to these men.

(Next—"Municipal Lodging House.")